

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-10

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DRAFTED BY ARA/PAN:SMBELL:ASM

APPROVED BY ARA - MR. ROGERS

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TO ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 062121

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:PFOR/PN

SUBJECT: U.S.-PANAMA TREATY NEGOTIATIONS: RECENT FORD AND
TORRIJOS STATEMENTS

FOR CHIEFS OF MISSION FROM ROGERS

1. IN THE LAST FEW DAYS, THE UPI SPANISH NEWS WIRE TO
LATIN AMERICA HAS CARRIED STORIES REPORTING STATEMENTS BY
TORRIJOS AND PRESIDENT FORD ESSENTIALLY AS FOLLOWS:

---A. TORRIJOS: IF CURRENT PEACEFUL NEGOTIATIONS FAIL WE
WOULD HAVE TO HAVE RECOURSE TO INSTANCES OF VIOLENCE.

---B. FORD: THE UNITED STATES WILL NEVER GIVE UP ITS
NATIONAL DEFENSE INTERESTS, NOR ITS INTERESTS IN THE
OPERATION OF THE PANAMA CANAL.

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2. IF READ TOGETHER -- AND IF READ WITHOUT APPRECIATION

FOR THE PRECISE STATE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS -- LATIN AMERICANS COULD INFER THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS ARE IN SERIOUS TROUBLE. SUCH, OF COURSE, IS NOT THE CASE.

3. FULL TEXT OF PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT MADE IN PEORIA, ILLINOIS IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION IS AS FOLLOWS: BEGIN QUOTE

---A. QUESTION: MR. PRESIDENT, I AM PASTOR OF A CHURCH HERE IN PEORIA. FROM TIME TO TIME WE GET REPORTS, PRINTED SOMETIMES, TO THE EFFECT THAT MR. KISSINGER AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAVE ALREADY MADE PROMISES AND COMMITMENTS REGARDING THE PANAMA CANAL TO A GOVERNMENT WHICH IS SOMETHING LESS THAN FRIENDLY TO US, AND FURTHERMORE, IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED THAT THE CONSTITUTIONAL CLAUSE WHICH FORBIDS ANY UNITED STATES PROPERTY TO BE SOLD WITHOUT APPROVAL OF THE CONGRESS, THAT THAT WILL BE CIRCUMVENTED BY RETAINING TITLE TO IT BUT NEVERTHELESS TECHNICALLY NOT SELLING IT, BUT IN REALITY GIVING ALL THE CONTROLS AND DIRECTION AND JURISDICTION TO THE PANAMA GOVERNMENT WHICH ONLY THE OWNER OF THE PROPERTY SHOULD HAVE.

---I WOULD LIKE YOU, MR. PRESIDENT, TO COMMENT ON THAT IF YOU WOULD.

---B. THE PRESIDENT: FIRST, LET ME SAY THAT WHATEVER IS DONE, IF IT REACHES THAT POINT, WILL BE FULLY SUBMITTED TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS, BOTH THE HOUSE AS WELL AS THE SENATE. IF PROPERTY IS SOLD -- AND I AM NOT SAYING IT IS -- OR IS TRANSFERRED, IT WOULD HAVE TO BE APPROVED BY BOTH THE HOUSE AND THE SENATE AND, OF COURSE, IF IT IS A TREATY, IT WOULD HAVE TO BE APPROVED BY THE SENATE ALONE, SO YOU CAN REST ASSURED THAT WHATEVER IS DONE, IF ANYTHING IS DONE, WILL BE SUBMITTED IN ITS ENTIRETY AND COMPLETELY OPEN AND ABOVE BOARD.

--NOW THE SITUATION IS THAT SINCE 1964 WHEN THEY HAD A SERIES OF RIOTS IN THE PANAMA AREA, THE CANAL ZONE AND THE GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA, SOME 30 PEOPLE WERE KILLED IN THOSE RIOTS, INCLUDING A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF AMERICANS. THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES PRECIPITATED NEGOTIATIONS
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THAT HAVE BEEN CARRIED ON BY THREE PRESIDENTS. THOSE NEGOTIATIONS ARE GOING TODAY BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA AND THE UNITED STATES.

--I CAN ONLY ASSURE YOU -- BECAUSE THE NEGOTIATIONS HAVE NOT BEEN COMPLETED -- THAT THE UNITED STATES, AS FAR AS I AM CONCERNED, WILL NEVER GIVE UP ITS NATIONAL DEFENSE INTERESTS, NOR GIVE UP ITS INTERESTS IN THE

OPERATION OF THE PANAMA CANAL. AND WHATEVER IS NEGOTIATED -- AND NOTHING HAS BEEN CONCLUDED -- WILL BE SUBMITTED IN ITS ENTIRETY TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES. END QUOTE.

4. IF QUERIED, YOU MAY WISH TO EMPHASIZE WITH REGARD TO STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT FORD THAT IT REPRESENTS RESTATEMENT OF WHAT HE HAS SAID ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS BEFORE -- THAT HE WOULD NOT SUPPORT OR RECOMMEND TO THE CONGRESS ANY TREATY WHICH DOES NOT PROTECT BASIC US INTERESTS IN THE OPERATION AND DEFENSE OF THE CANAL OVER THE LONG TERM. THE NEGOTIATIONS ARE CONTINUING AND WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO REACH AN AGREEMENT THAT WILL ACCOMMODATE THE BASIC INTERESTS OF BOTH COUNTRIES.

5. WITH REGARD TO THE STATEMENT BY GENERAL TORRIJOS, BELIEVE YOU SHOULD POINT OUT THAT IN HIS COMMENTS HE EMPHASIZED HIS COMMITMENT TO THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS AND TO THE EFFORT TO RESOLVE OUR DIFFERENCES OVER THE CANAL THROUGH NEGOTIATION. OTHER COMMENTS DEALT WITH EXTREME HYPOTHETICAL SITUATION WHICH WE DO NOT EXPECT TO ARISE. YOU SHOULD ALSO REFER TO STATEMENT BY PANAMA'S CHIEF NEGOTIATOR MINISTER TACK IN SAN JOSE FOLLOWING HIS MEETING WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER THAT "GREAT PROGRESS" HAS BEEN MADE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. KISSINGER

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